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From: [Thayer Broili](#)
To: [Jocelyn Wright](#)
Cc: [Britta Muiznieks](#); Catherine_McCurdy@NPS.GOV; [Darrell Echols](#); [Doug McGee](#); Eric_Frey@NPS.GOV; [Margaret Carfioli](#); [Michael Piatak](#); [Mike Murray](#); [Paul Doshkov](#)
Subject: Re: AMOY Trip Report
Date: 10/28/2010 09:27 AM
Attachments: [2010 AMOY Trip Report.docx](#)
[AMOY Banding Protocol and Comments.docx](#)

Jocelyn,
Very good trip report. This is the type of info. that should be developed at important meetings that RM staff attend as it provides important information that all appropriate RM staff need to be aware of. Good job!

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**Jocelyn
Wright/CAHA/NPS**

10/26/2010 10:08 AM

To Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Darrell Echols/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Doug McGee/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Michael Piatak/CAHA/NPS@NPS
cc Margaret Carfioli/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Paul Doshkov/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Eric_Frey@NPS.GOV, Catherine_McCurdy@NPS.GOV
Subject AMOY Trip Report

Hello All,

Attached is the report for my trip taken 10/11-10/14 to the AMOY Working Group. The report is also on the shareall.

One of the topics discussed was the negative affect that ORV groups had at Cape Cod NS on their trapping program. Once the public learned that the park was trapping the response was so powerfully negative, lead mostly by ORV groups, that the park was forced to end their trapping program. Since residents have recently learned of our trapping efforts I'm worried that a similiar situation will occur at CAHA.

Thanks!

0030179

Jocelyn Wright
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Ocracoke Island



(252) 305-1045 (cell) 2010 AMOY Trip Report.docx



AMOY Banding Protocol and Comments.docx

**American Oystercatcher Working Group
Banding Protocol
2005**

- 1) Color bands will be size 6 and composed of three ply Darvic PVC (1.5mm thick).
 - a. Each band will be engraved with two two-digit codes separated by a dot.
 - b. The codes will be Numeric/Numeric, Alpha/Alpha, Alpha/Numeric and Numeric/Alpha.
 - i. Numbers used: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 - ii. Letters used: A C E F H J K L M N P R T U W X Y
 - iii. Letters removed: B D G I O Q S V Z

This gives a total of **729 combinations** (100 NN, 289 AA, 340 AN and NA) for each color.

- 2) Each state/region will be assigned a band color as follows:
 - New England/Long Island (currently only Monomoy NWR, MASS): Yellow w/Black lettering
 - New Jersey: Orange with Black lettering
 - Virginia: Black with White lettering
 - North Carolina: Green with White lettering
 - South Carolina: Dark Blue with White lettering
 - Georgia: Red with White lettering

As new states join the banding effort they can be assigned new colors or share existing colors depending on the AMOY population of the state and the size of the banding project. Florida would be assigned White with Black lettering, while MD and DE could join with the Virginia and New Jersey colors, respectively. New England and Long Island can share a color since all banding in this area would be done on a local scale during the breeding season.

- 3) Each bird will be banded with two identical Darvic bands (one on each of the upper legs) and a USFWS band on a lower leg. This will increase re-sighting probability and allow us to estimate the rate of band loss.
- 4) Young birds will be banded as close to fledging as possible to minimize any possible impact to young birds and to reduce band loss due to chick mortality. Minimum banding age (with engraved bands) will be 21 days.
- 5) We will leave open the option for individual projects to use smaller color bands on the lower legs as needed. These might be used for a short term behavioral study or for estimating pre-fledging survival. These projects would be evaluated on a case by case basis.
- 6) A central banding and re-sighting database will be maintained at North Carolina State University and will be accessible by all AMOY researchers. In addition, AMOY re-sights will be posted on the Oystercatcher banding web page (with a caveat directing those wishing to use or cite the data to obtain permission from the appropriate party). Re-sight data from each project will not be posted without the express permission of the researcher.

Notes: The previous number of band combinations was 625, but we added in the letters W and L after discussion with Haggie Engraving, making the total 729. The only problem with W and L is confusion if they are put on the bird upside down. The other letters were removed because of confusion with other letters/numbers in the field. We decided to stick with a two-digit system rather than three. We felt that using three codes would significantly decrease re-sighting probability. In order to see all three numbers/letters at once, the code size would have to be greatly reduced. If/when a project runs up against the 729 code ceiling we can expand the color scheme (e.g. light blue, dark red, light green, etc.). We are also exploring the possibility of adding additional characters for the engraved codes (Greek alphabet, shapes, etc.). Even a few more characters would add several hundred codes for each color. We tried several code delimiters, but the dot works best. The others we tried all were too easily confused with the codes themselves.

UPDATE FROM ALEX WILKE 02/05/08

Hi everyone,

Sorry for the long overdue update on the status of our band codes and darvic supply. Here is what I've learned.

CODE STATUS: The table below are the rough numbers for each state for the codes used and remaining. Seems like we're in pretty good shape for the time being if everyone maintains the same level of banding activity. Note the extra ten possible codes for Georgia...that's because Brad has a letter/number series with the letter Z.

	Massachusetts	New Jersey	Virginia	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia
No. codes applied:	176	118	319	236	140	90
No. codes in hand:	50	162	172	323	30	50
No. remaining codes to order:	503	449	238	170	559	599
Sub-total of remaining codes to be used:	553	611	410	493	589	649
Total possible codes:	729	729	729	729	729	739

POSSIBLE CODES: This is the list of numbers and letters for codes from the most recent banding protocol from Shiloh. The * is something that we did in Virginia because we found that the W's combined with other letters were too squeezed. That eliminates 33 codes for us.

Numbers used: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Letters used*: A C E F H J K L M N P R T U W X Y

Letters removed to reduce observer error: B D G I O Q S V Z

*Ws only omitted for letter/letter combinations. Not number/letter.

DARVIC SUPPLY: the company that made Darvic, does not any more...we knew that. Robin is actively working with folks from Europe and others to keep track of any updates on this issue. The last word that I got from BTO (or AC Hughes...I can't remember which) is that someone (a break-off from the original company) is experimenting with making darvic again but only in black and white. The future of this is unknown but any success of the effort will trickle down to us through Robin's communications with the folks in Europe, I'm sure. Regardless of this, Robin says that we (oystercatcher banders) should be OKAY as far as ordering our bands from him for the next several years. In other words, he has a good supply of the darvic needed to make the AMOY bands in all the colors and doesn't anticipate running out for several years if we maintain pretty much the same level of banding activity. He said he is most limited with the yellow.

Robin is also actively experimenting with a new material that may be a suitable replacement for darvic (not the one that I mentioned at the AMOY meeting, but another). Hopefully this material will work out, but again for AMOY bands, I don't think we need to worry about that in the near future anyway.

CODE ELEMENT DELINEATOR: there was a recent discussion between a few of us about the difficulties of determining which element of the two-digit codes on the bands comes first. Pat Leary suggested that there may be some way to put an additional mark on the band that would tell the observer which code was first. I've attached two photos of some sample bands from Robin showing an example of something that could be done to accomplish this. There are a lot of questions here: 1) do we really need to change the current scheme, i.e. are people having enough trouble with this to warrant the change?; 2) if so, would this be a good option; 3) would the underline potentially blend in too much with the code from a distance making it even harder to read?; 4) would changing the banding scheme like this affect detection probability and thus complicate analysis of new and old resight records?, etc. We're definitely curious to hear everyone's thoughts on this before we put in our next band order.

Thanks!!

Alex

COMMENTS FROM PAT LEARY 10/05/10

Hi Ted: I've looked at the banding protocol and I offer the following comments:

Z is now in use in GA. For unknown reasons the Z is crossed through the middle with a slash. I can't imagine what other letters might be confused with a cap Z - slash or no slash. The slashed Z is confusing until one determines what the font is.

In the field, there is no apparent difference between 0 (zero) and the letter O

Double letters are now in use and can be confusing – I suspect this is why one letter is underlined. Unless the observer is aware that double letters are in use, he or she might doubt their sighting since the two (duplicate) letters are seldom visible to the observer at the same time due to the wrap around configuration. We experienced this doubt and confusion until we were absolutely certain the band code contained double letters – YE[TT] YE[RR] BK[NN]

FL is now using Red bands with White codes per GA (small sample so far)

Though perhaps too early for satisfactory analyses, the DE flags seem as effective as REKN flags. But why start with three element codes vs. two elements per the wrap around bands? To differentiate DE from NC in the database, DE could be entered as FG flag green [code] or GF green flag[code] to denote G flag vs. DG bands. By this means, the flags could be smaller (2 vs. 3 elements) Furthermore, some three letter combinations can blur at distance [MNM] [UJJ] [UUJ] [FEF] [EEF], etc. Such codes tend to merge together when viewed at distance or through a wind-vibrated scope.

I've already expressed my concerns re the use of X and K. Once again it is the "wrap around" configuration that creates the problem with partially exposed letters. When the right half of either letter is exposed, they appear identical and thus could be incorrectly recorded as X. We know this from experience, but what of other, non-affiliated, observers across the range?

Thanks for soliciting my opinion. All comments are based on our field experience detecting and deciphering the coded bands over several seasons now. It has been a pleasure collaborating with the group, discussing associated field problems and working to resolve some of these issues.

We'll never achieve a "fool-proof" marking scheme, but through mutual effort, we might refine a less problematic code.

Best regards,

Pat

SUMMARY OF DELAWARE FLAG PILOT STUDY FROM MATT BAILEY

Hello All!

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program initiated its first year of American Oystercatcher (AMOY) banding in 2010. During the 2010 breeding season we were able to capture and individually mark 8 chicks and 10 adults. We are piloting the use of individually coded leg flags for our marking scheme. The scheme is following established Pan-American Shorebird Program protocol for flagging shorebirds. Therefore, we are using dark green flags inscribed with 3 white characters. We hope the use of 3-character flags will alleviate issues associated with running out of unique combinations using the 2 character bands currently used by the group. They are also fitted with an uncoded orange band on the opposite leg that indicates the NJ/DE region. This will let observers know there is a marked bird in the flock if the flag is not visible (e.g. while roosting on one leg). Specific placement of the bands and flags are as follows:

Upper Left Leg: Green Flag with White 3-Character Code

Lower Left Leg: Nothing

Upper Right Leg: Orange Band with no Characters

Lower Right Leg: Metal USGS band

Please see the attached photos for examples of the 3-character flags. For perspective, the photo of AAT was digiscoped at 75 yards with 40x magnification. If anyone resights one of these birds, please report the sighting on the AMOY Working Group website. We are anxious to see where these birds go but we are also interested in how detectable the flags are on wintering grounds! Please keep your eye out for these birds as they begin to migrate south!

Thanks!

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TRAVEL MEETING/CONFERENCE NOTES

TRAVELER:

Jocelyn Wright

TITLE OF MEETING OR OTHER EVENT ATTENDED:

2010 Atlantic Coast American Oystercatcher Working Group Annual Meeting

TRAVEL LOCATION AND DATES:

South Wellfleet, MA 10/11/2010-10/14/2010

PURPOSE OF MEETING OR EVENT:

To discuss evidence of population declines, particularly in the Southeastern U.S., and coordinate research aimed at understanding the bird's biology and conservation needs.

PERSONS/ORGANIZATIONS IN ATTENDANCE:

There were a total of 43 attendees. A representative list is below:

Scott Melvin – Massachusetts, MA Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Matthew Boarman – Massachusetts, Monomoy NWR
Scott Heckler – Massachusetts, Goldenrod Foundation
Mark Faherty – Massachusetts, Massachusetts Audubon
Ellen Jedrey – Massachusetts, Massachusetts Audubon
Todd Pover – New Jersey, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey
Matthew Bailey – Delaware, DE Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Alex Wilke – Virginia, The Nature Conservancy
Ruth Boettcher – Virginia, VA Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries
Jessica Stocking – North Carolina, NC State
Ted Simons – North Carolina, NC State
Tracy Bornman - North Carolina, NC State
Jon Altman - North Carolina, Cape Lookout NS
Sarah Schweitzer – North Carolina, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Felicia Sanders – South Carolina, SC Dept of Natural Resources
Brad Winn – Georgia, GA Dept of Natural Resources
Dan Petit – National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Alan Poole – Cornell University
Wendy Green – Rhode Island, US Fish & Wildlife
Bruce Peterjohn – US Geological Survey
Pamela Denmon – Texas, US Fish & Wildlife

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:

Need for periodic and well coordinated range wide surveys: This topic was discussed at length and it was agreed that there is a need for range wide surveys every five years. Range wide surveys can be conducted with airplanes but many organizations were unable to commit to performing a survey at this time due to budget concerns. The discussion will be continued at the 2011 meeting.

What factors limit our ability to work collaboratively on increasing the population of oystercatchers: The number one factor was predation. The group discussed several factors of predator management including intensity and protocol, targeted trapping vs blanket removal, public reactions to trapping and trapping alternatives, i.e. electric fencing.

Participants shared predator management experiences and overwhelmingly the evidence supported predator removal. Electric fencing had limited success but the cost associated with the fencing prevents it from becoming a long term management technique. Trapping was the most effective management technique at

several sites including CAHA. USGS trappers were recommended for organizations that could not employ a full time trapper.

Public reaction to trapping was a concern and educational meetings/flyers were discussed. The best recommendation was to invite a hunting/trapping educator, from state organizations such as NCWRC, to educate the public at scheduled public meetings. The goal is to inform the public, through an impartial party, that trapping is a safe and effective management technique that will not incidentally affect their pets. Cape Cod NS shared that when the public learned of trapping within the park the ORV groups created a negative campaign against trapping and the park does not trap now in response to the negative public sentiment. CAHA was strongly recommended to attempt public education to prevent a similar situation happening.

AMOY Banding Database:

Shiloh Schulte and Jessica Stocking will take the previous AMOY banding database maintained by NC State and create a Googledoc banding database that will be shared by all participants in the AMOY Working Group.

AMOY Bands:

Oystercatchers are banded with two character color bands, different colors for each state. Unique two character combinations are close to depletion so three character color bands were discussed. Delaware has initiated a pilot study and banded 18 birds with three character bands. The group's concern was the size of the band and would like the bands to be re-designed to ~30% smaller. The Delaware birds will be monitored to determine if the larger band is a hindrance. (see additional document 'AMOY Banding Protocol and Discussion')

Several other topics were discussed such as terminology and productivity monitoring. CAHA is already in compliance with these issues.

A graduate student project monitoring the affect of military overflights on Cape Lookout was presented but the data analysis is in the beginning stages and no results have been made. The project monitored oystercatchers through video, audio and a heart rate monitor. The results showing AMOY disturbance by ORVs and pedestrians will be interesting and applicable to CAHA. Jocelyn is in e-mail contact with the graduate student, Tracy Borneman, and will be updated as the data is analyzed.